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ABSTRACT

This volume is largely based on data from the Sloan Study of Youth and Social Development, a 5-year study begun in 1989 when many of the students were in eighth grade (n=7,000). This account presents good news and bad news about our teenagers. Contrary to prevailing notions, theirs is the most ambitious generation yet, but because schools and parents do a poor job of directing them, many take the wrong courses, choose the wrong colleges, and often finish college with neither job skills nor specific career goals. Besides a large-scale survey, students were interviewed over 5 years, and data from other sources are integrated into this work. Chapter 1, "Ambitious Adolescents," provides a case example of a typical teen, which serves to focus the research issues. Part 1 compares students from the 1950s and 1990s and includes chapters: (2) "Imagining the Future"; (3) "Trying to Make It with a High School Diploma"; and (4) "The Importance of Aligned Ambitions." Part 2 discusses "The Formation of Aligned Ambitions" in these chapters: (5) "Channeling Ambitions in High School"; (6) "Families and the Shaping of Aligned Ambitions"; (7) "Teenage Work and Internships"; and (8) "Being Alone and Being with Friends." Part 3, "Defining a Pathway," includes: (9) "The Ambition Paradox"; and (10) "Supporting the Development of Aligned Ambitions." Appendixes are: (A) The Alfred P. Sloan Study of Youth and Social Development; and (B) Logistic Regression Models. (EMK)

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